

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of)	
Telecommunications Relay Services, and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech)	CC Docket No. 98-67
)	CG Docket No. 03-123
)	
)	

**REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION
BY ULTRATEC, INC., SPRINT CORPORATION,
AND HAMILTON RELAY, INC.**

I. Introduction

Ultratec, Inc., Sprint Corporation, and Hamilton Relay, Inc. (“petitioners”) submit this petition seeking clarification that an enhanced two line VCO service called two line captioned telephone service is a telecommunications relay service (TRS) eligible for reimbursement from the Interstate TRS Fund.

The FCC has already determined single line captioned telephone to be an enhanced VCO service that is reimbursable under the FCC’s rules.¹ In June 2003, the FCC also added to its list of mandated relay services two-line VCO, finding this feature to be technically feasible, desired by consumers, and consistent with the Commission’s mandate to make new telecommunications technologies available to people with disabilities.² In the same way that two-line VCO is an improved extension of VCO, two-

¹ *In the Matter of Telecommunications Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Disabilities, Declaratory Ruling*, CC Dkt 98-67, FCC 03-190 at ¶16 (2003). Specifically, the Commission concluded that captioned telephone is an innovative way to provide VCO.

² *In the Matter of Telecommunications Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Disabilities, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, CC Dkt. 98-67, CG Docket No. 03-123, FCC 03-112 at ¶¶27,29 (2003)

line captioned telephone is simply an improved version of one-line captioned telephone. The nature of both underlying services are exactly the same: the captioned telephone user gets to both hear and read what the other party is saying with the assistance of a communications assistant and voice recognition technology. The main differences between the two forms of captioned telephone is the number of lines used and the many benefits offered by two line captioned telephone. As will be shown below, these benefits allow two line captioned telephone users to enjoy more functionally equivalent access to the telephone network than they can with its single line predecessor.

II. How Two-line Captioned Telephone Works

Two-line captioned telephone requires the user to have *two* standard telephone lines available. The first of these lines is set up as the user's primary telephone line, and is typically the published telephone number for the user. The second telephone line supports captions from the captioned telephone relay service. When a captioned telephone user places an outbound call, the two-line captioned telephone dials out on the first (primary) telephone line directly to the called party, in the same way that traditional telephone calls are directly placed to their destinations.

As the user is dialing, the two-line captioned telephone phone simultaneously connects to the captioned telephone relay service on the second telephone line. When this connection is made, the two-line captioned telephone takes the voice of the party who is called off the first telephone line and sends it to the captioned telephone relay over the second line. As with single line captioned telephone, the captioned telephone communications assistant (CA) then re-voices everything that is said by the called party. Voice recognition technology then transcribes what the CA says into text and sends captions back on the second line to the display of the two-line captioned telephone.

For inbound calls to the captioned telephone user, the calling party simply dials the user's main (typically published) telephone number. The call comes directly in to the two-line captioned telephone in the same way a call would come in to any traditional telephone. When the captioned telephone user answers the call, the two-line captioned telephone automatically connects the captioned telephone relay service using the second telephone line, and the call proceeds the same as an outbound call.

III. Benefits of Two-line Captioned Telephone

The chief advantage of two-line captioned telephone is that it allows users to access the telephone network in exactly the same way that a traditional telephone user accesses the network, with all of the same functions and features enjoyed by conventional voice telephone users. The following is a breakdown of some of the benefits that this produces:

Inbound Direct Dialing – One of the most significant advantages of two line captioned telephone is that it allows its users to enjoy the telephone network in exactly the same way that conventional voice telephone users can use this network. Although one-line captioned telephone users may make outbound calls to non-captioned telephone users directly and without the intervention of a CA, inbound calls made over one-line captioned telephones must first go through a captioned telephone relay center. Two-line captioned telephone, however, works just like a traditional telephone in both directions. No special “relay” numbers are needed and users can give out their own telephone numbers, not the number of the captioned telephone relay, to receive calls. In order to call the captioned telephone user, third parties simply need to dial the user's number as if he or she were making any other telephone call. Captioning support will appear on all incoming calls and can be easily toggled on or off at any time.

This facet of two line captioned telephone makes incoming relay access more functionally equivalent than it has ever been. This is an especially important feature in the employment setting as it allows deaf and hard of hearing individuals to conduct telephone business in the same way that their hearing colleagues can. The ability to communicate by phone without requiring incoming callers to first make contact with a communication assistant can enable employees to take on far more tasks than previously possible. Improved telephone access in the workplace means more job opportunities, better employment benefits, and more chances at advancement. This is critically important for deaf and hard of hearing people, who historically have had greater instances of unemployment and underemployment than the general population. With seamless incoming phone access, individuals who have two line captioned telephone can enjoy telephone service that is truly functionally equivalent, fulfilling not just the mandate of Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act, but the intent and spirit of Title I of that Act to end employment discrimination against people with disabilities.

Complete Use of All Conventional Telephone Features – Because a two-line captioned telephone directly connects both parties to a call on the primary telephone line and adds the captioned telephone relay service only on the second telephone line, the two-line captioned telephone user also has access to other telephone network features enjoyed by conventional voice telephone users. In fact, all of the functions of the telephone system, including advanced services, such as *69, call waiting, and call forwarding, work just like they do for any traditional telephone. Again, this is in contrast to one-line captioned telephone, which must go through a captioned telephone relay service in order to be connected to the other party. When the captioned telephone

operator is placed in the middle of these single line relay calls, these and other calling features are not always possible.

Faster and More Effective Emergency Access – Another advantage of two-line captioned telephone is that it makes it possible for users to directly access 9-1-1 emergency services in exactly the same way that hearing telephone users can access these services, while simultaneously receiving captions back via the second telephone line. With two-line captioned telephone, a user is always sure that his or her call will go directly to the most appropriate PSAP as fast as other voice calls, and pass along the same critical information – including automatic numbering and location information – that is vital to an immediate emergency response. At the same time, two-line captioned telephone still allows callers to receive captions that can assist in understanding information exchanged during these emergencies.

Multiple People on A Call – Because the connection to a two-line captioned telephone is a voice connection just like any other call, multiple people can be on two-line captioned telephone calls at the same time. Not only may other household members or employees share calls on phone extensions, but two-line captioned telephone users can even initiate three-way or conference calls. The latter is not possible for one-line captioned telephone calls because the captioned telephone call uses a data (not a voice) connection.³

Captions Added During Calls – With one-line captioned telephone, captions are only initiated at the start of the call by the captioned telephone user or the person who is calling that individual. By contrast, two-line captioned telephone allows captions to be

³ As the FCC is aware, it is for this reason that Ultratec and Sprint have pending before the FCC a petition for clarification on the three-way calling standard. Although single line captioned telephone users can participate in three-way calls, they are not able to initiate these calls.

added for *any* call and *at any time during the call*, even after the call is already in progress. For example, a call placed to a two-line captioned telephone user may be answered first by a family member, switchboard operator, or co-worker with any phone in the system. When the captioned telephone user picks up that call on a two-line captioned telephone, he or she can then add the captions via the second line at any time. This means the relay system does not pay for valuable minutes while a call is being handled by the switchboard operator or others who may not need relay support within a particular household or office.

IV. Funding Issue

There is one funding issue that distinguishes one-line from two-line captioned telephone. All relay calls made over one-line captioned telephone are treated exactly the same as traditional TRS calls with respect to their jurisdiction and funding. Specifically, relay centers are able to accurately determine whether inbound and outbound one-line captioned telephone calls are intrastate, interstate, or toll free because they can capture where each call originated and where it will end. In this way, relay centers can report and bill call minutes to the states and the Interstate TRS Fund for their respective minutes.

Traditional TRS reporting is also possible for *outbound* two-line captioned telephone calls. When the two-line captioned telephone user places the outbound call directly on the first telephone line to the called party, the phone is designed so that it records the number the user dialed and automatically forwards that number to the captioned telephone relay center through the second line. Once the relay center connects the call to its destination, it has information about where both ends of the calls are located, and can bill accordingly.

However, *inbound* two-line captioned telephone calls are different because there is no way of knowing where these calls originated. As explained above, a two-line captioned telephone user receives an inbound call directly on his or her primary telephone line in the same way that conventional voice telephone users receive their calls. When the call comes in, the captioned telephone dials the relay center on the second line. The problem is that for residential phone service, there is no information available about the original calling party that could be forwarded with this call to the center on this second line. This limitation of residential phone service makes it impossible to identify whether the call is an intrastate, interstate, or toll free call. Although Caller-ID might work on occasion, this would not offer a consistent solution because it is often blocked or unavailable. Also, because Caller-ID is a fee-based service, it may put an unfair additional financial burden on the user.

Because inbound two-line captioned telephone calls do not go through the captioned telephone relay center, and the incoming number and billing jurisdiction of these calls are not identified, an alternate solution is needed to achieve the appropriate jurisdictional separation of costs for inbound captioned telephone calls. It is petitioners' understanding that the NECA TRS Advisory Council will be proposing a solution to this problem to the FCC.

V. Conclusion

Captioned telephone has proven itself to be an extremely valuable telephone service for significant portions of the deaf and hard of hearing population, and has filled a void for many people, especially senior citizens, who had been reluctant to use traditional TRS. Two-line captioned telephone can provide these telephone users with access to the telephone network that is even more functionally equivalent to conventional voice

telephone services than was possible with one-line captioned telephone. Because two-line captioned telephone service is merely an extension of its predecessors – VCO, two-line VCO and one-line captioned telephone – with significantly more benefits, petitioners urge the FCC to define this as a TRS service that is eligible for interstate reimbursement.

Respectfully submitted,



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